

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A medical implant comprising:

a first bone anchor having a first proximal head and a first distal threaded shank;

a second bone anchor having a second proximal head and a second distal threaded shank;

and

a brace assembly comprising:

a shell coupled to the first proximal head;

a brace having a longitudinal axis and a slot longitudinally displaced along the brace;

~~means for facilitating pivoting the brace from a first position to a second position, wherein~~

~~in the second position the brace couples the first bone anchor to the second bone anchor;~~

a pair of bearings displaced on opposite sides of the brace and positioned between the

brace and the shell, each of the pair of bearings riding within the slot longitudinally displaced

along the brace, wherein the bearings allow~~means~~ for slidingly adjusting and pivoting the brace

relative to the first proximal head along at least a portion of the longitudinal length of the

brace; and

~~means for transmitting torque between the brace and at least one of the first and second bone anchors.~~

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) The medical implant of claim 25 wherein the medical implant further comprises:
a receptacle; and
means for polyaxially attaching the receptacle to the second proximal head of the second bone anchor; and wherein the receptacle comprises means for engaging with the brace.

30. (Previously presented) The medical implant of claim 25 further comprising:
means for locking the brace and the anchors in a fixed relationship with each other.

31-42. (Canceled)

43. (New) The medical implant of claim 30 wherein the means for locking the brace and the anchors in a fixed relationship comprises one or more set screws.

44. (New) The medical implant of claim 43 wherein the one or more set screws clamps against one or more of the first and second heads to prevent movement of the brace with respect to one or more of the first and second bone anchors.

45. (New) The medical implant system of claim 29 wherein the brace includes a second end portion that is at least partially ball shaped.

46. (New) The medical implant system of claim 45 wherein the second end portion snaps into the receptacle.

47. (New) The medical implant system of claim 45 wherein the means for engaging the brace includes an inner surface of the receptacle that is keyed to match the second end portion.

48. (New) The medical implant system of claim 30 wherein the brace is curved.

49. (New) The medical implant system of claim 46 wherein the first and second bone anchors are pedicle screws.

50. (New) The medical implant system of claim 25 wherein the brace assembly further comprises means for transmitting torque between the brace and the first distal threaded shank.

51. (New) The medical implant system of claim 50 wherein the means for transmitting torque includes a first key at a distal end of the brace temporarily mated to a recess area on the first proximal head.

52. (New) The medical implant system of claim 25 wherein the brace has a first position in which a longitudinal axis of the brace is generally in line with a longitudinal axis the first bone anchor and a second position in which the longitudinal axis of the brace is pivoted approximately 90 degrees from the first position.

53. (New) A medical implant comprising:

a first bone anchor having a first proximal head and a first distal threaded shank; and

a brace assembly coupled to the first proximal head, the brace assembly comprising:

a brace having a first end portion and a second end portion;

a pair of bearings displaced on opposite sides of the brace, each of the pair of

bearings riding within a slot longitudinally displaced along the brace, wherein the brace

has a first position in which a longitudinal axis of the brace is generally in line with a longitudinal axis the first bone anchor and a second position in which the longitudinal axis of the brace is pivoted approximately 90 degrees from the first position.

54. (New) The medical implant of claim 53 wherein the first proximal head is polyaxially coupled to the brace assembly.

55. (New) The medical implant of claim 53 wherein the first end portion of the brace is at least partially ball shaped.

56. (New) The medical implant of claim 53 wherein the brace is curved.